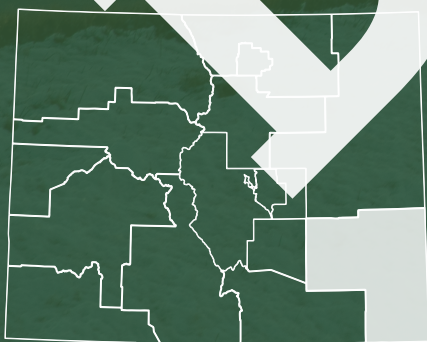


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# Southeast Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

August 2025

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**Counties:**  
Baca, Bent,  
Crowley, Kiowa,  
Otero, and  
Prowers

Above: The location of counties in the Southeast  
Transportation Planning Region.

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Photo Credit: Dave Hattan

# Southeast Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

The Southeast (SE) Transportation Planning Region (TPR) includes Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties. The largest cities in the Region include Eads, La Junta, Las Animas, Lamar, Ordway, and Springfield. Public transit and human services transportation play an integral role in the Region’s multimodal transportation network by providing mobility and promoting personal independence to residents in the Region. Transit improves quality of life and supports public health by providing access to jobs, schools, shopping, food, medical care, senior centers, social services, and social/recreation activities in the Region, while also providing connectivity to goods and services in nearby major activity centers, such as Pueblo.

## SE Transit Vision

To provide a safe, convenient, reliable, and efficient transit network to serve residents and visitors throughout the Region.

## SE Transit Goals

1. Maximize transit services and facilities to meet existing transit needs and those in the future.
2. Evaluate the need for additional transit service and facilities.
3. Maintain service of the Amtrak Southwest Chief passenger train through southeast Colorado.
4. Increase regional and intra-regional service for medical, employment, and educational trip purposes.
5. Increase coordination among state, regional, local, public, non-profit, and private entities to more effectively achieve shared community goals.

Every four to five years, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in coordination with regional planning partners, refreshes the regional transit plans in all rural regions of the state. This 2025 plan refresh builds on the previous plan, completed in 2020, and focuses primarily on updating key components such as textual and data revisions to ensure continued alignment with evolving needs. While a larger overhaul of the Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plans will occur during the next full update in another four to five years, this refresh will ensure that the plan remains relevant and effective in addressing the mobility needs of Coloradans.

CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail, in coordination with SE TPR members and transit agencies, gathered input from the general public to develop this plan in compliance with CDOT and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning requirements. The SE TPR will use this refreshed plan to prioritize transit investments and work toward the long-term implementation of the Region’s unique transit vision and goals, while maintaining a framework for developing an integrated statewide transit system.



# Regional Snapshot

Transportation—whether walking, biking, taking transit, vanpooling, carpooling, or driving a car—is a critical element of everyone’s daily life and well-being. Providing access to safe and reliable transportation for all, regardless of who they are or from where they come, results in communities that meet the mobility needs of all, encourage healthier lifestyle choices, and improve economic prosperity.

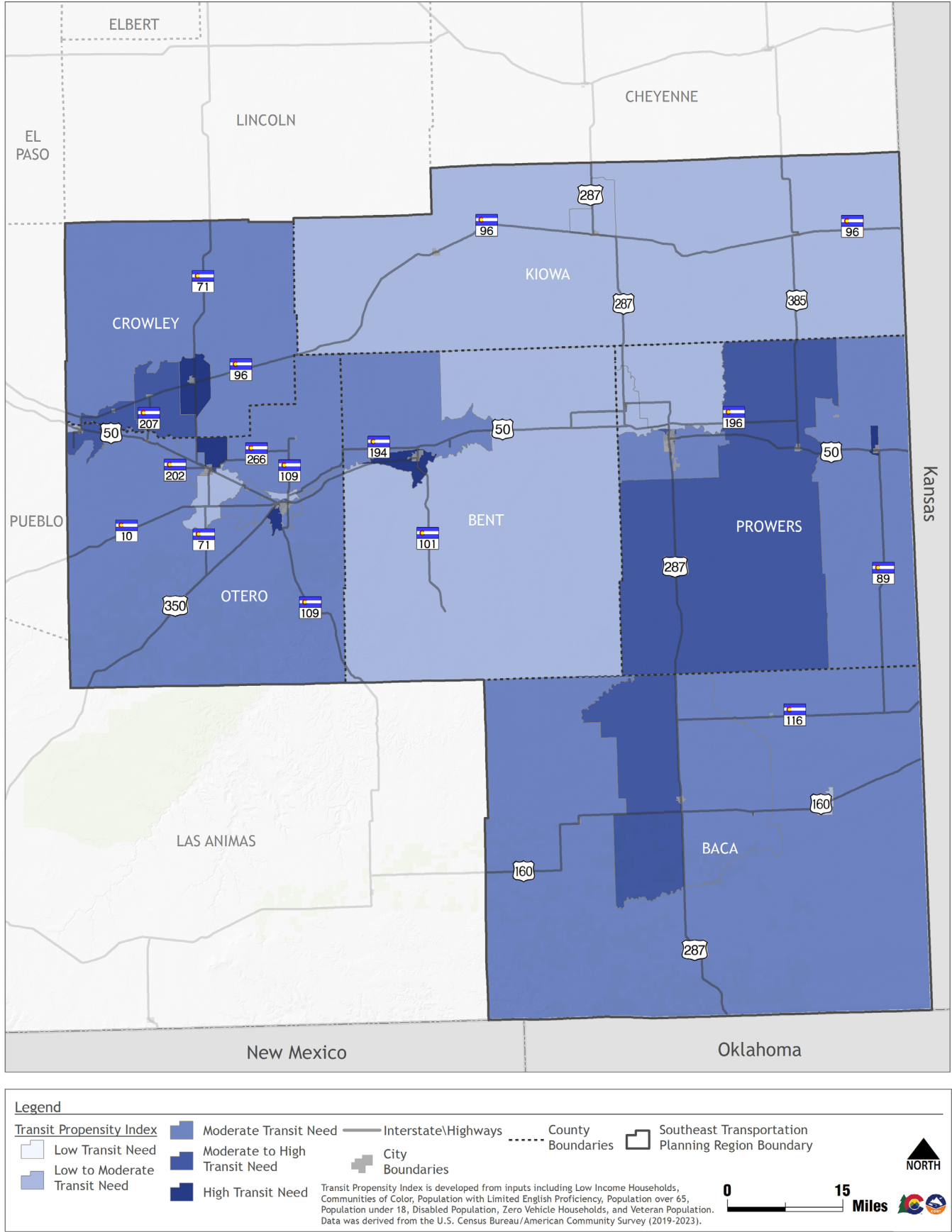
When considering the SE TPR’s mobility future, reviewing and analyzing available data helps uncover potential transportation network gaps and needs. Populations that often have a higher than average need for transit and/or have limited access to transportation services and facilities must be considered as a part of any needs-focused assessment of transit access and connectivity.

## Transit that Serves All Coloradans

Colorado’s statewide transit planning efforts consider the needs of all people. A strong transportation network that is conveniently located, easy to navigate, and serves everyone helps ensure reliable and affordable access to jobs, medical care, education, grocery stores, and social or recreational activities. This access creates opportunities that can positively affect personal health, employment, and overall quality of life.



## Identified Transit Needs







## What We Heard

CDOT coordinated with each TPR to assess goals, priorities, and desired transit improvements for their communities, while also evaluating any changes since the last plan. What we heard from the SE TPR members and agencies is summarized below.



### Collaboration Across Regions

Need for regional transit opportunities within the SE TPR to better connect towns and communities at a regional level.



### Small Starter Services

Need for greater feasibility and simplicity in launching new transit services, with an emphasis on using smaller vehicles such as vans to support implementation.



### Prioritization of Local Efforts

Need to prioritize more locally operated projects to better reflect community-specific needs and capabilities.

## Public Engagement Overview

### Telephone Town Halls

As part of the public outreach conducted for the statewide planning process, CDOT hosted a series of regional telephone town halls between April and June 2025. These live, over-the-phone events served as a highly accessible platform for engaging Coloradans across all regions of the state. More than 50,000 participants joined the town halls, where they had the opportunity to ask questions about transportation issues and provide input through interactive live polling. Each session connected residents directly with CDOT leadership, who answered over 120 questions live, addressing concerns ranging from road conditions and transit service expansion to safety, accessibility, and long-term investment strategies. On average, participants stayed engaged for more than eight minutes per call, reflecting a high level of interest and involvement. The telephone town halls were designed to broaden access, especially for those who may not be able to attend in-person meetings or navigate digital tools.

### Statewide Online Survey

To complement this outreach, CDOT also conducted a Statewide Online Survey to gather additional public feedback on transportation priorities. More than 3,400 Coloradans from all 64 counties participated, providing valuable input on needs and opportunities related to transit and mobility. Together, the telephone town halls and online survey played a crucial role in understanding statewide, regional, and local transportation needs, to ensure that the planning process was informed by a wide and representative range of voices from urban, suburban, and rural communities alike.







## Public Engagement Key Themes

### 1. Transit Investment

- Expand basic public transit services, particularly in rural areas with limited or no current options.
- Invest in both bus and rail services to connect residents with essential services, jobs, and other communities.

### 2. Transit Accessibility

- Improve access to transit for populations in remote or low-density areas, where car ownership may not be feasible.

### 3. Regional Transit Integration and Connectivity

- Support future connectivity to Front Range Passenger Rail, potentially as a way to manage traffic congestion and provide long-distance mobility options for Southeast Colorado residents.

### 4. Safety and Supporting Infrastructure

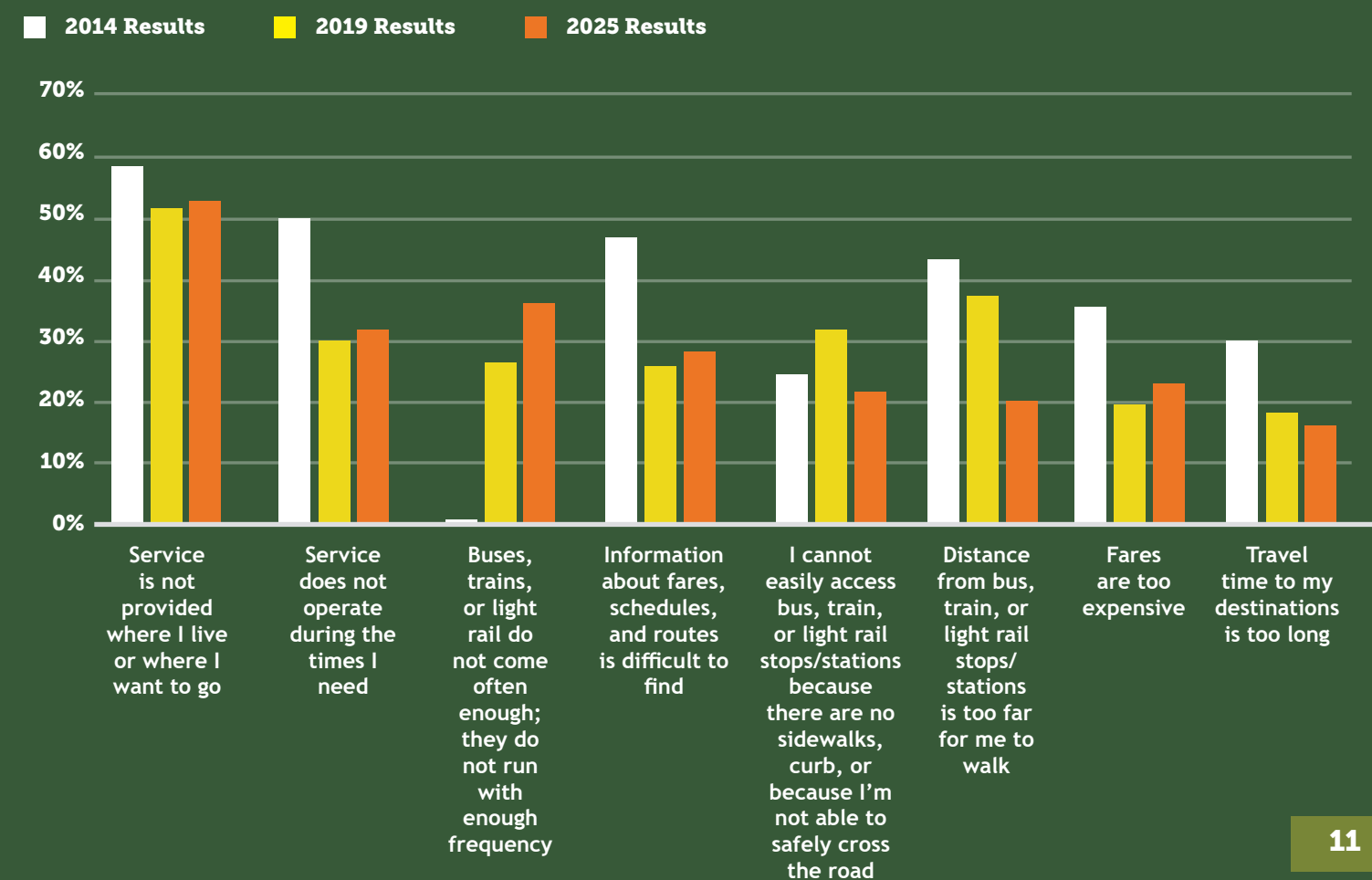
- Provide safe and accessible transit infrastructure, including shelters, sidewalks, and signage, particularly where existing facilities are lacking or outdated.

## 2025 Statewide Transit Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

In 2014, CDOT conducted its first statistically valid statewide survey specifically targeting older adults and adults with disabilities. The goal of the survey was to better understand the unique travel behaviors and transportation needs of these populations, who often face distinct mobility challenges. CDOT conducted the survey in 2019 and again in 2025 to capture changes over time and provide insight into how shifting demographics, services, and infrastructure have impacted mobility.

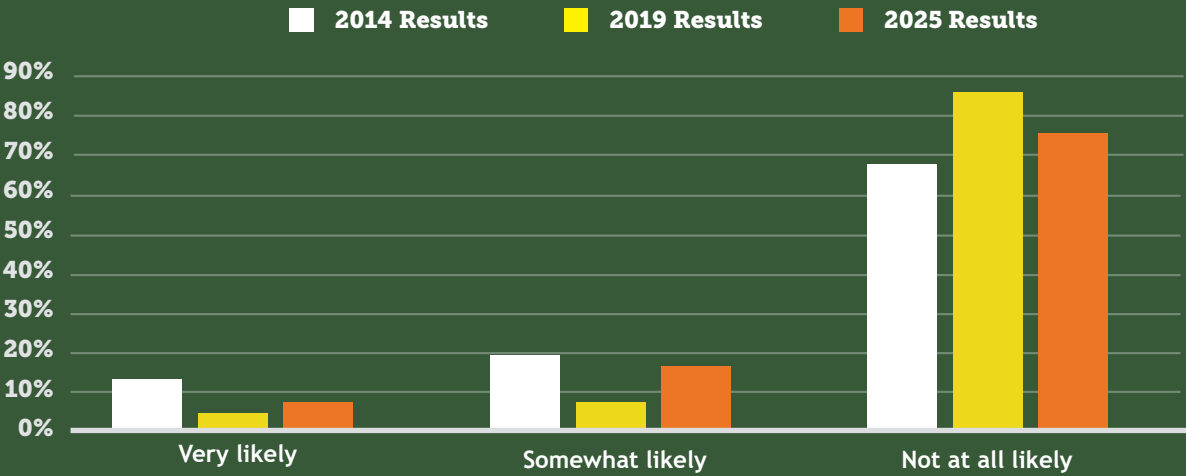
The most consistent challenge across all three years was service availability, with 59 percent of respondents in 2014 saying that service was not provided where they lived or wanted to go, followed by 51 percent in 2019 and 52 percent in 2025, indicating little long-term improvement. Similarly, concerns about service not operating during needed times dropped sharply from 50 percent in 2014 to 30 percent in 2019, and remained low at 32 percent in 2025. The perception that transit service does not run frequently enough grew over time, rising from 27 percent in 2019 to 36 percent in 2025. Meanwhile, difficulty accessing fare, schedule, and route information declined between 2014 and 2019, from 47 percent to 26 percent, but slightly increased again to 28 percent in 2025. Challenges with infrastructure access, such as inadequate sidewalks or curbs, saw some fluctuation, rising from 25 percent in 2014 to 31 percent in 2019, before decreasing to 21 percent in 2025. Walking distance to transit stops became less of a concern over time, decreasing steadily from 43 percent in 2014 to 20 percent in 2025. Finally, the cost of fares was cited by 37 percent of respondents in 2014 as a significant issue, but this dropped to 20 percent in 2019 and slightly increased to 23 percent in 2025. Travel time to destinations taking too long has steadily decreased from 30 percent, to 18 percent, and now stands at 16 percent.

### Barriers to Using Public Transportation Services



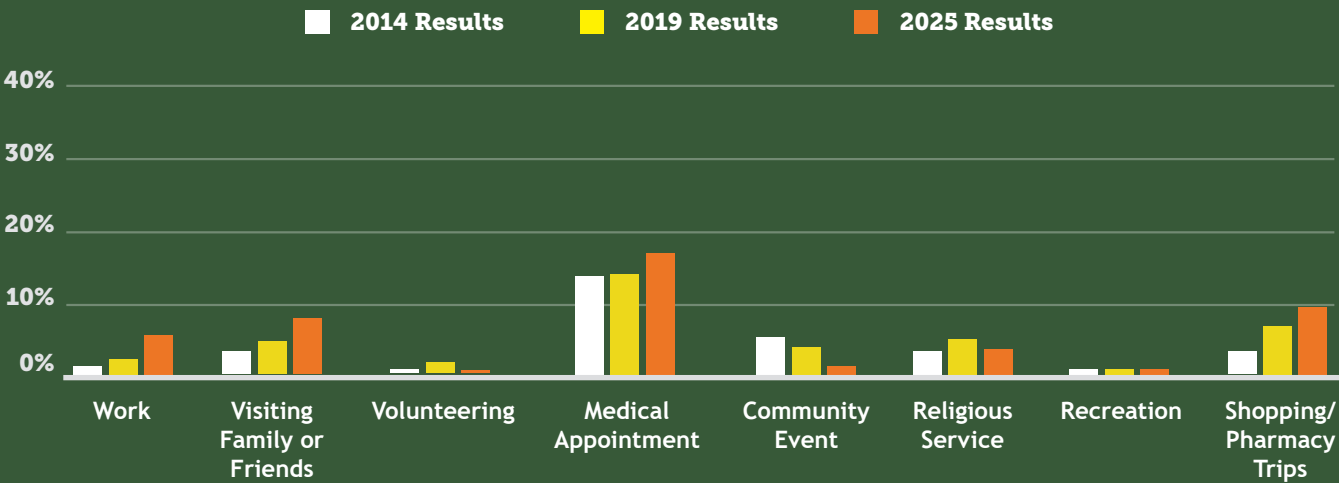


For the times you drive yourself, how likely would you be to use fixed route public transportation or demand-response transportation services instead of driving?



In 2014, 12 percent of respondents indicated they were very likely to use transit, 20 percent were somewhat likely, and 69 percent said they were not at all likely. By 2019, interest in using transit declined sharply, with only 6 percent saying they were very likely, 7 percent somewhat likely, and 87 percent not at all likely to consider transit. In 2025, willingness to use transit rebounded slightly compared to 2019. Eight percent of respondents reported being very likely to switch from driving to transit, 18 percent were somewhat likely, and 74 percent remained not at all likely to make the switch.

For what types of trips do you need transportation but have trouble finding transportation?



Across all years, the most commonly reported need was for medical appointments, with 14 percent of respondents in both 2014 and 2019, increasing slightly to 16 percent in 2025. Transportation barriers for visiting family or friends have risen steadily, from 3 percent in 2014 to 5 percent in 2019 and 8 percent in 2025. Similarly, the percentage of individuals needing transportation for work has grown from 1 percent in 2014 to 6 percent in 2025. For shopping or pharmacy trips, reported difficulty increased consistently: 4 percent in 2014, 7 percent in 2019, and 10 percent in 2025. Other trip types, such as religious services and recreation, remained relatively stable over time, each ranging between 2 and 4 percent. Volunteering-related transportation challenges were minimal throughout the years, with 0 to 1 percent reporting issues.

Existing Providers and Coordination Activities

All transit service provider information and associated data for the SE TPR were collected from the 2023 National Transit Database, previous plans, CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail, tailored outreach to providers, and internet research. While extensive efforts were made to collect information about all providers, the information may not be comprehensive.

Bustang Outrider

Bustang, Colorado’s statewide bus service, offers affordable and reliable transportation between major cities and regions. Bustang’s mainlines serve I-70 and I-25 to connect Denver with destinations such as Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Vail, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction and to provide convenient options for travelers across the state. In addition, Outrider extends service to rural communities, to offer regional connections and enhance access to areas not covered by Bustang.

Lamar to Colorado Springs Outrider Route

Outrider connects the SE TPR to the Pikes Peak and Pueblo areas. Operated by the Pueblo Senior Resource Development Agency (SRDA), service includes one bus daily from Lamar to Colorado Springs in the morning and Colorado Springs back to Lamar in the afternoon.

Southeast stops: Fowler, Manzanola, Rocky Ford, Swink, La Junta, Las Animas, Fort Lyon, and Lamar



## Transit Service Types

- Fixed-route: Transit service that operates on a defined route and schedule.
- Deviated Fixed-Route: Transit service that follows a defined route and schedule but will deviate off route within a defined area to pick up passengers upon request.
- Commuter Bus: Local fixed-route bus transportation primarily connecting outlying areas with a central city. Characterized by a motorcoach, multiple trip tickets and stops in outlying areas, limited stops in the central city, and at least 5 miles of closed-door service.
- Demand Response: Typically door-to-door service where riders call ahead to schedule a trip (e.g., Dial-a-Ride, Call-n-Ride, Access-a-Ride).
- Vanpools: Service organized in advance by a group of people who travel to and from similar locations at the same time.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Fixed-route bus systems that operate at least 50 percent of the service on a fixed guideway. These systems also have defined passenger stations, traffic signal priority or preemption, short headway bidirectional services for a substantial part of weekdays and weekend days, low-floor vehicles or level-platform boarding, and separate branding of the service.
- Aerial Tramway: Unpowered passenger vehicles suspended from a system of aerial cables and propelled by separate cables attached to the vehicle suspension system. Engines or motors at a central location, not onboard the vehicle, power the cable system.

## Transit Service Categories

- Interstate Public: Open to the general public and connects one or more regions/TPRs to regions outside the state of Colorado.\*
- Interregional Public: Open to the general public and connects one region/TPR of the state to another region/TPR.\*
- Regional Transit Service: Open to the general public and connects communities and counties within a region/TPR.
- Local Transit: Open to the general public and operates primarily within a city, town, or community.
- Human Services Transportation: Provided by a human services agency that is typically for a specific population, such as older adults, people with disabilities, or veterans.
- Private For-Profit Transportation: Operated privately and includes taxis, resort transportation, ridehailing services (Uber, Lyft), etc.

\* Interstate and interregional include intercity bus service as defined by the FTA in reference to the FTA's classification for Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Funding eligibility





# Interregional, Regional, and Local Transit Providers

The SE TPR has a range of interregional, regional, and local public transit providers that operate commuter bus, fixed-route bus, on-demand services, and vanpool services.

Note: Ridership, budget, revenue miles, and revenue hours include all service types.

Provider	Service Area	Type of Service	Span of Service	Fare	2023 Annual Ridership	2023 Ops and Admin Budget	2023 Vehicle Revenue Miles	2023 Vehicle Revenue Hours
Bent County (Bent County Transit)*	Bent County	Demand Response, Fixed-route	Daily, 8am to 4pm	Free to \$1	28,646	\$391,250	173,673	6,277
Bent County (Golden Age Transit Services [GATS])**	Bent County	Demand Response	Daily, 8am to 4pm	Free to \$1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
City of La Junta	La Junta city limits + 4-mile radius outside city limits	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 8am to 5pm	\$1	14,595	\$298,612	22,088	2,988
Kiowa County Transit	Kiowa County (primarily)  Prowers, Pueblo, El Paso, and Denver counties	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 8am to 5pm	Free to \$110	26,000	\$29,980	33,353	N/A
Prowers County (Prowers Area Transit [PATs])	Prowers County	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 7:30am to 5pm	\$1 to \$6	22,416	\$569,873	80,334	10,080
SETran***	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	Fixed-route	Mon-Fri, 7:30am to 4pm	\$1 to \$22	1,446	\$231,942	58,359	N/A

Source: 2023 National Transit Database and Tailored Provider Surveys

\*Bent County Transit was previously a local and regional service. Now, Golden Age Transit Services operates local service and SETran operates regional service as of April 2024. Data from 2022.  
 \*\*Now operates as a local service only.  
 \*\*\*Data from 2024 as service began April 2024.



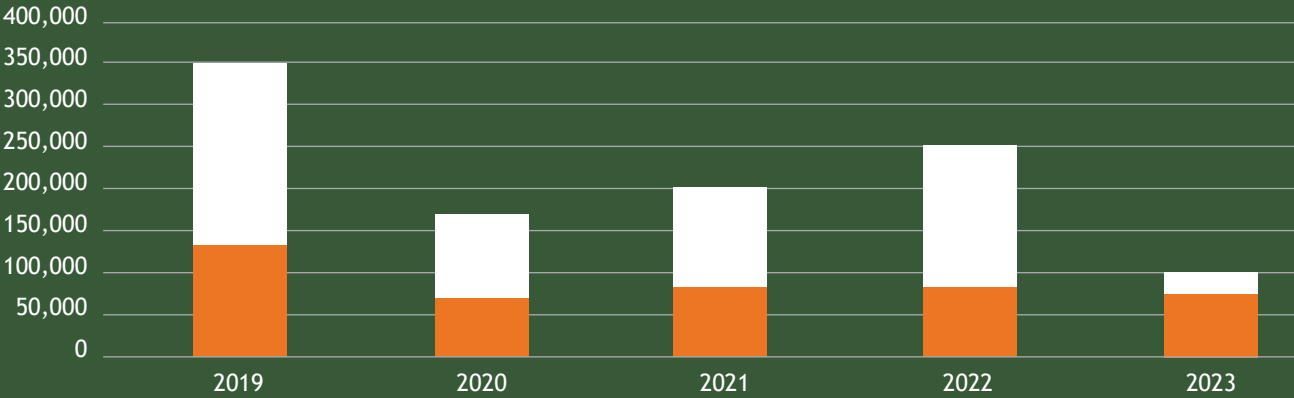




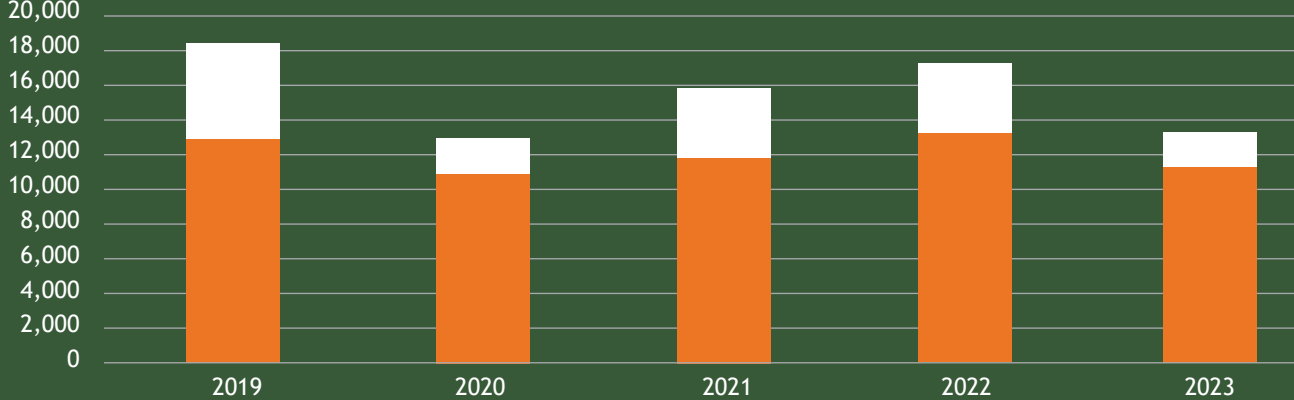
# 5-Year Historic Operating Data

Five-year historic trends for key transit operating metrics (ridership, revenue miles, and revenue hours) for all local and regional public transit service providers in the SE TPR show that ridership dipped significantly between 2019 and 2020 due to COVID-19. While ridership saw a slight rebound following the pandemic, overall demand for transit services has remained low. However, the introduction of new services and operational changes, such as the division of Bent County Transit into Golden Age Transit Services (GATS) and SETran, are intended to improve accessibility and, in turn, increase transit use in these otherwise geographically dispersed communities.

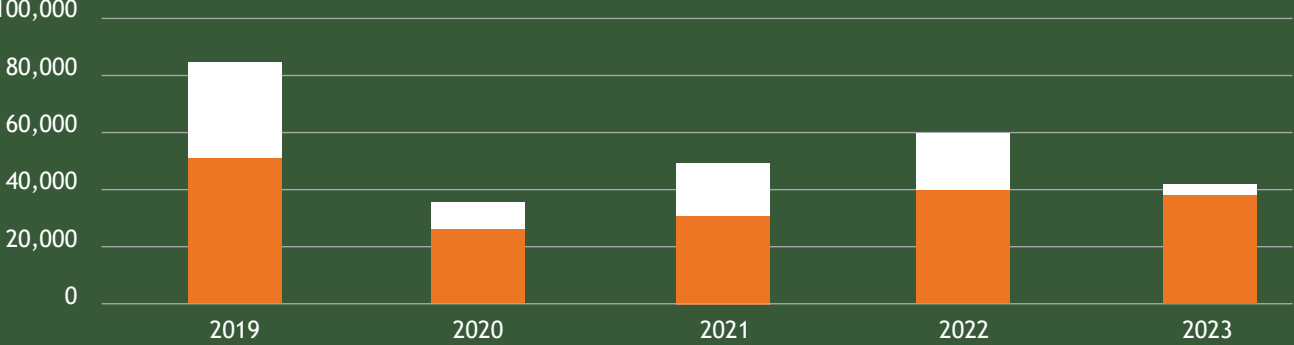
## Total TPR Vehicle Revenue Miles



## Total TPR Vehicle Revenue Hours



## Total TPR Unlinked Passenger Trips

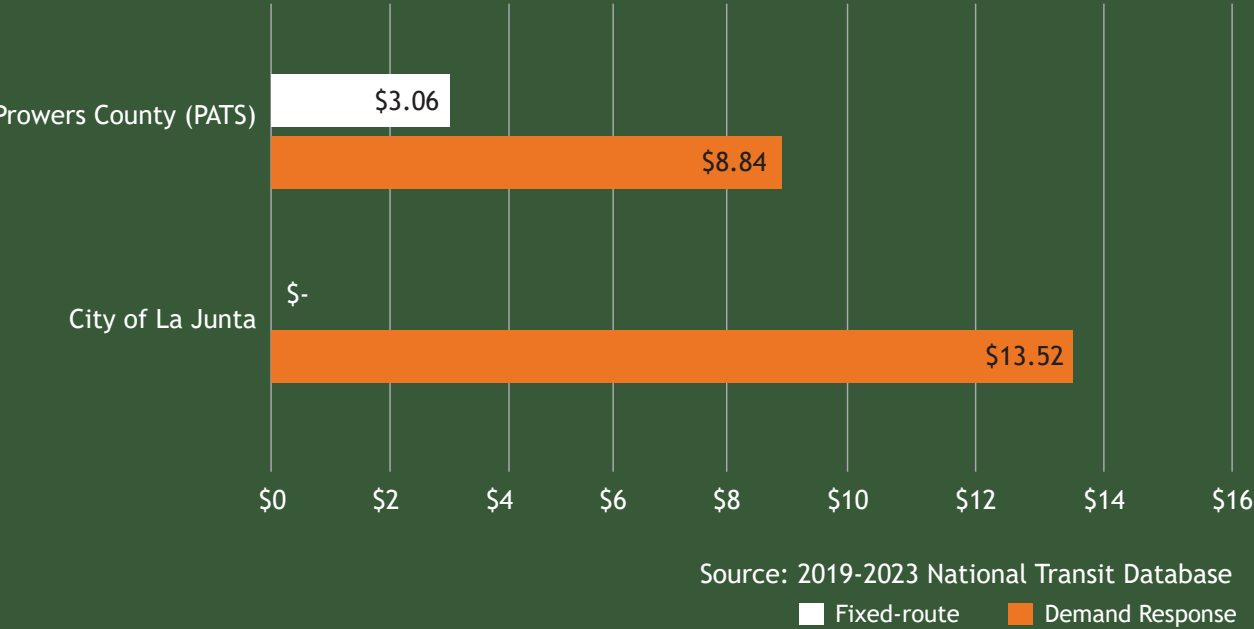


# Transit Provider Service Performance Metrics

Key performance data indicate the efficiency of an agency's service operations. SE TPR cost per trip, cost per revenue hour, and cost per revenue mile are highlighted to identify performance across agencies.

## Cost per Mile

Prowers County (PATs) operates both fixed-route and demand response services, with a cost per mile of \$3.06 for fixed-route and \$8.84 for demand response. The City of La Junta operates only demand response service, with a reported cost per mile of \$13.52.

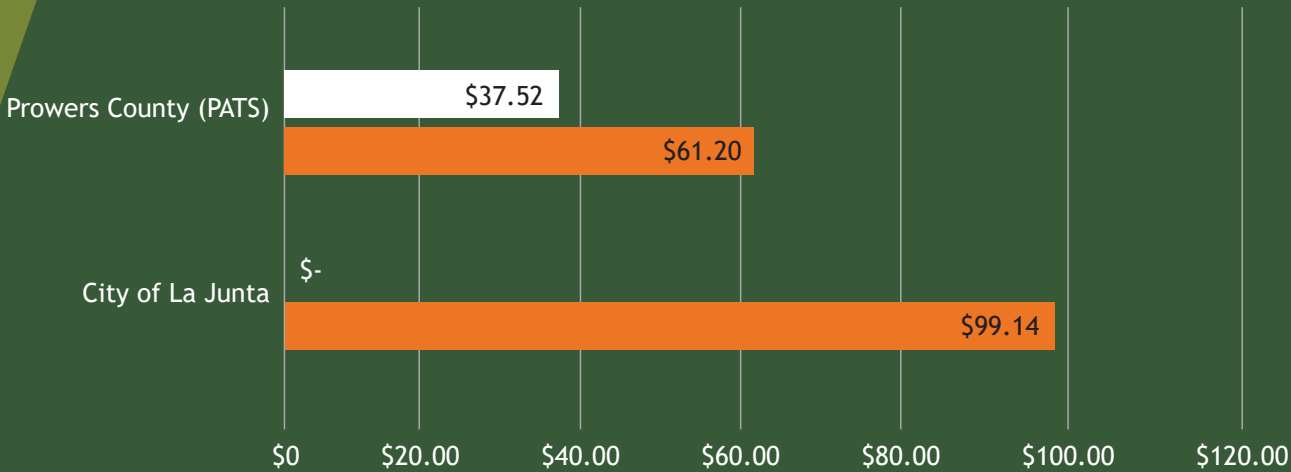


Source: 2019-2023 National Transit Database  
■ Fixed-route ■ Demand Response



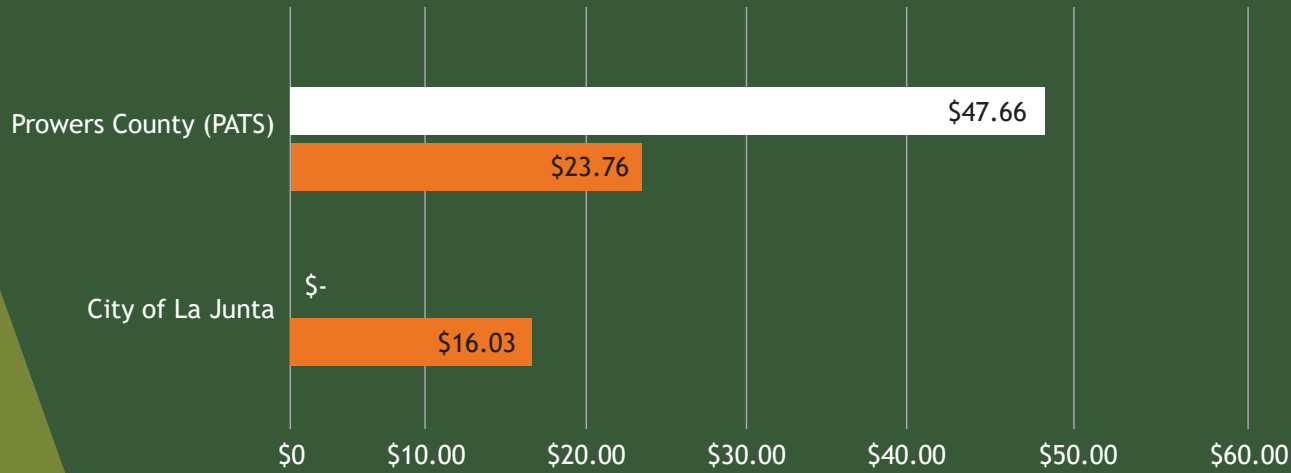
# Cost per Hour

PATS reports a cost per hour of \$37.52 for its fixed-route service and \$61.20 for demand response service. The City of La Junta does not report any fixed-route service but records a demand response cost per hour of \$99.14.



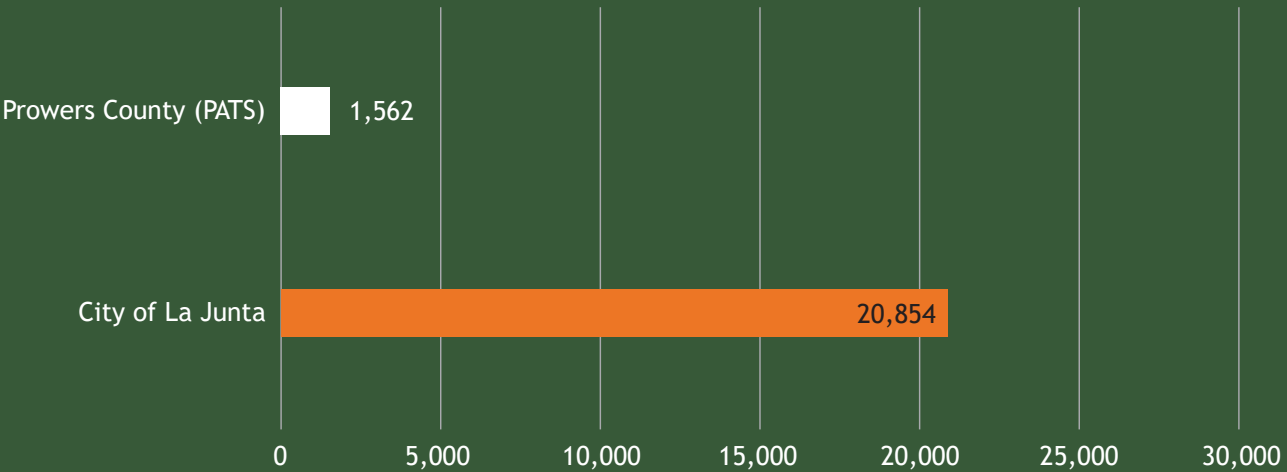
# Cost per Ride

PATS reports a cost per ride of \$47.66 for fixed-route service and \$23.76 for demand response. In contrast, the City of La Junta, which reports only demand response service, shows a lower cost per ride at \$16.03.



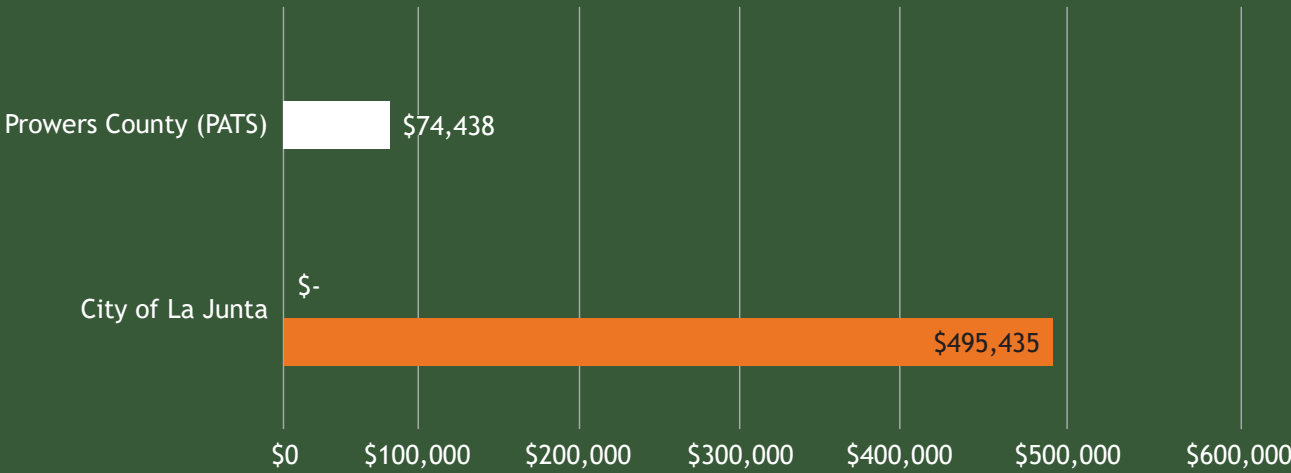
# Annual Ridership

PATS reported a total of 1,562 rides for its fixed-route service. In comparison, the City of La Junta, which operates demand response service, recorded significantly higher ridership at 20,854 annual trips.



# Annual Operating Costs

PATS reported an annual operating cost of \$74,438 for its fixed-route service. In contrast, the City of La Junta, which operates only demand response service, reported significantly higher annual operating costs totaling \$495,435.



Source: 2019-2023 National Transit Database  
Fixed-route Demand Response



# Human Services Transportation Providers

Several human services agencies operate transportation services in the SE TPR; however, for many of these providers, transportation is only one of the services they provide. The following table identifies human services agencies in the Region that provide transportation services and the populations they serve. The table includes providers from the 2020 SE Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan that still provided services in 2025, as well as providers found through desktop review. As this list was compiled through online research, it may not reflect all providers in the SE TPR, particularly those that do not have websites.

Provider	Service Area (Within SE)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
American Red Cross - Southeastern Colorado	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	CFR, SLV, SC, PPACG, PACOG	Demand Response	Upon request	Older adults and critically ill
Aponi Transport Inc.	Baca and Otero counties	CFR, Eastern, SLV, SC	Demand Response	Daily	N/A
Baca County Seniors Van	Baca County	N/A	Demand Response, Specialized Services	Mon-Thurs, 8:30am to afternoon	Older adults (60+), people with disabilities
Bent, Crowley and Otero County Veterans Transportation	Bent, Crowley, and Otero counties	N/A	Demand Response	Upon request	Need-based and veterans with disabilities
Disabled American Veterans	Las Animas and Fort Lyon	GVMPO, GV, SW, SLV, PPACG, Eastern, NFRMPO, DRCOG	Fixed-route, Demand Response	Mon-Fri	Veterans
Friends Transportation LLC	Crowley County	N/A	Demand Response (Medical), Specialized Services	Mon-Fri, 4:30am to 6pm; Sat, 4:30am to 12pm	Individuals requiring non-emergency medical transportation, including those with mobility challenges
Golden Gate Manor Inc.	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	CFR, GV, IM, NW, SLV, SC, SW, Eastern	Demand Response (Medical)	Mon-Fri	Medicaid-eligible older adults and people with disabilities
Inspiration Field	Crowley, Otero, and Bent counties	N/A	Demand Response	M-F	Individuals with developmental disabilities
K A Dorman Enterprises	Baca, Bent, and Otero counties	CFR, PPACG, PACOG	Demand Response (Medical)	Daily	Individuals requiring non-emergency medical transportation
Las Animas Helping Hands	Las Animas	N/A	Vouchers or Reimbursement	N/A	N/A

# Human Services Transportation Providers (continued)

Provider	Service Area (Within SE)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
Lower Arkansas Valley Area Agency on Aging	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	N/A	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 8am to 1pm	N/A
Prowers, Kiowa, and Baca Veterans Services	Prowers, Kiowa, and Baca counties	N/A	Demand Response	Upon request	Need-based and Veterans with disabilities
The Victorious Church	La Junta	N/A	Demand Response	Upon request	Community members in recovery
ValleyWide Health	Lower Arkansas Valley	SLV	Demand Response, Vouchers or Reimbursement, Bus Passes or Tickets	Mon-Fri	Older adults (65+), individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, veterans, Medicaid recipients
Sunshine Rides	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	CFR, Eastern, GV, Grand Valley MPO, PPACG, DRCOG, IM, SLV, NW, SW	Demand Response	Daily	Open to all passengers requiring

Source: Desktop Review

## Other Human Services Agencies

Some human services providers do not offer direct transportation services but may fund transportation programs, offer transportation-related services, or coordinate with transportation providers in the Region. The following table lists providers from the 2020 SE Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan that were still active in 2023, along with additional providers identified through online research. Since this list was compiled through available online resources, it may not include all providers in the SE TPR, especially those without websites.

Provider	Service Area (Within SE)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
Las Animas Helping Hands	Las Animas (city)		Vouchers or Reimbursement	Upon Request	Open to all passengers requiring transportation services

Source: Desktop Review

Other Human Services Providers (continued)

Provider	Service Area (Within SE)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
MedRide	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	CFR, Eastern, GV, Grand Valley MPO, DRCOG, PPACG, PACOG, NFRMPO, IM, NW, SLV, SC, SW, UFR	Demand Response, Specialized Services	Upon request	Medicaid recipients
Mt Ride LLC	Prowers County	CFR, PPACG	Demand Response (Medical)	Mon-Fri, 6am to 6pm Sat-Sun, 6am to 5pm	Open to individuals requiring non-emergency medical transportation services
Southeastern Developmental Services	Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, and Prowers counties	N/A	Fixed-route, Demand Response, Bus Passes or Tickets	Fixed-route: Mon-Thurs Demand Response: Daily	Individuals with disabilities
Van with a Plan LLC	Bent, Crowley, and Otero counties	CFR, Eastern, GV, PPACG, PACOG, GVMPO	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 6:30am to 11pm Sat-Sun, 7am to 11pm	Current Health First Colorado (Medicaid) clients who have no other means of transportation and require transport to non-emergency medical services covered by Medicaid

Source: Desktop Review

Private Transportation Providers

Two private for-profit companies in the SE TPR provide transportation services, including Uber and City Cab.



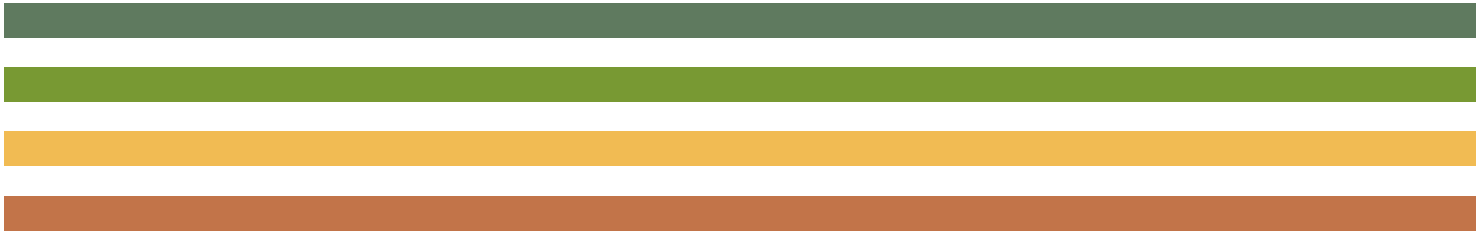
Photo Credit: bacacounty.gov

State of Good Repair

CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail comprehensive Transit Asset Management Plan meets federal requirements and was last updated fall 2023. The Plan identifies the condition of assets funded with state or federal funds to guide optimal prioritization of investments to keep transit systems in Colorado in a state of good repair. Currently, one-third of CDOT tracked transit vehicles in the SE TPR are beyond their state of good repair.

Provider	Total Revenue Vehicles	Vehicles Beyond State of Good Repair	Percentage of Vehicles Beyond State of Good Repair	Cost of Backlog
Bent County (Bent County Transit)	7	4	42.86%	\$1,311,251
Bent County (Golden Age Transit Services [GATS])	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
City of La Junta	4	0	0.00%	\$0
Kiowa County Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prowers County (PATS)	7	2	28.57%	\$80,000
SETran	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	18	6	33%	\$1,391,251

Source: 2023 Transit Asset Management Plan





# Regional Coordination Activities

Coordination of transportation services, funding sources, information, vehicles, and equipment is paramount when looking for ways to minimize service duplication, create more efficient and productive systems, and provide trips to as many people as possible. A variety of existing coordination activities occur between transit providers and human services agencies in the SE TPR. A survey and virtual interview were used to gather information in the SE TPR about coordination to better understand current activities and identify barriers.

## Local/Regional Coordinating Councils

Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development, Inc. (SECED) organizes the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) in the Region - SETran. While SECED do not directly provide transportation services, they initiate and hold quarterly RCC meetings. SECED’s goals are to strengthen the economic vitality of the SE TPR and develop multimodal transportation options to improve mobility and support economic development. SETran was established in 2018.

SETran provides several transportation resources, in addition to serving as the RCC in SE TPR. SETran is a one call center and provides a mobility guide with information about service providers in the Region. In addition, SETran organizes biweekly meetings with all mobility and transit directors in the Region to coordinate efforts and communicate any updates. Key meeting participants include Baca Area Transportation, Prowers/Kiowa/Baca Veterans Services, Golden Age Transit Services, Inspiration Field, Bent/Crowley/Otero Veterans Transportation, Kiowa County Transit, Lower Arkansas Valley Area Agency on Aging (AAA), La Junta Transit, Prowers Area Transit, and Southeast Developmental Services. While many of these agencies are up to 50 miles apart, there are strong partnerships and coordination between providers across the Region.

Currently, SETran is developing a software program funded via FTA Section 5311 funds. This software will be used as a rider platform for dispatching purposes to aid connections between SETran’s services and local transit agencies. As a part of this new technology, an app will be developed to allow riders to see where their bus is; although, riders will not be able to book rides through the app. The app will also list transit services by town, along with contact information, detailed service descriptions, and fares.

## Mobility Management

Since the adoption of the 2020 Southeast Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan, SETran has designated a Mobility Manager, who was officially hired in 2021, to support implementation and coordination efforts.

## Coordinating Services/Schedules

SETran provides a regional fixed-route transit connection to fill the gaps between the other existing transit providers in the SE TPR. This new service started in April 2024 as a result of the split up of Bent County Transit into SETran (regional provider) and Golden Age Transit Services (local, Bent County). In addition, SETran serves as a demand response dispatcher to connect riders to the correct transit service needed to reach their destination. SETran also refers clients to Bustang, MedRide, and Golden Gate and refers transit agencies to Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) resources.

## Other Partnerships

Crowley recently launched a Free Fare program for the summer. Additional funding will be necessary to continue this service. SETran also shares funding resources with City of La Junta and Prowers Area Transit. Kiowa County Transit receives funding from the Lower Arkansas Valley AAA. Other transit providers regularly update a services brochure, including City of La Junta.

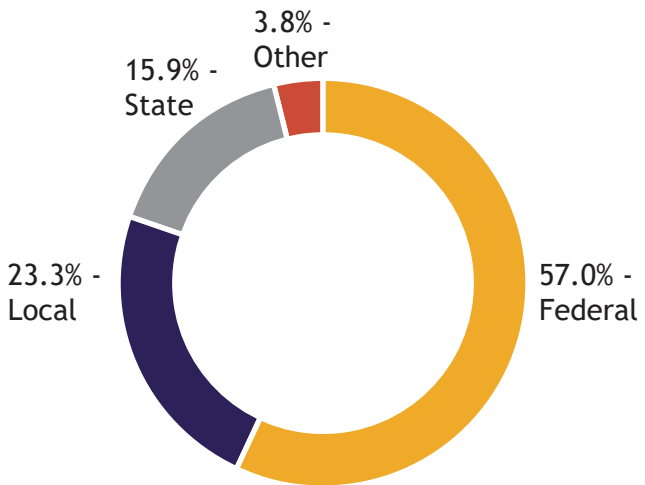
## Barriers to Coordination

Regionally, the lack of funding was identified as a significant barrier to transit services and coordination. Even though SETran operates multiple programs, it relies almost entirely on limited membership dues, which are insufficient to meet operational needs. SETran has avoided seeking outside funding sources like AAA to prevent competition with local providers and to maintain a collaborative approach. In addition, because SETran operates a deviated fixed-route system, it is prohibited from serving as a Medicaid provider, which is a major limitation and prevents them from accessing any Medicaid-related funding. Expanding service would require grant applications and matching funds. Other factors impacting service expansion include staffing and vehicle limitations.

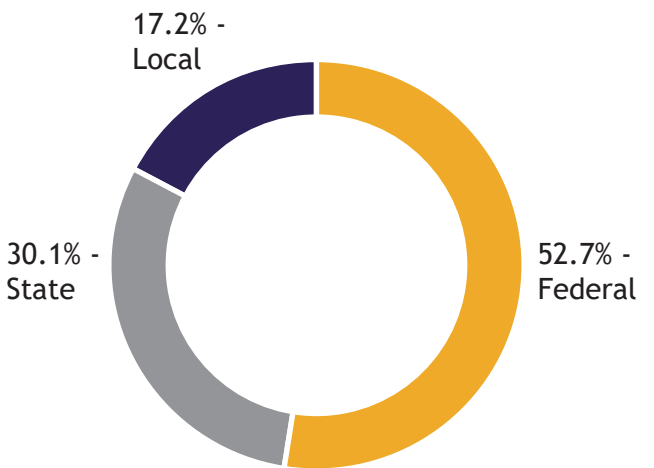
# Financial Snapshot

Because transit funding is complex, Colorado providers typically use a patchwork funding approach that includes federal, state, local fares, donations, and/or tax revenues. Public funds are primarily used to support transit and transportation services in rural parts of Colorado, with most agencies relying on federal funds from FTA. For Operating Revenue Sources, federal funding provides the largest portion at 57.0 percent. Local governments contribute 23.3 percent, while the state accounts for 15.9 percent. A small remaining share of 3.8 percent comes from other sources. In the Capital Revenue Sources chart, federal funding again leads at 52.7 percent, followed by state contributions at 30.1 percent and local sources at 17.2 percent. Overall, the data highlights the critical role of federal funding in supporting both operating and capital transit expenditures, with state and local governments providing important complementary support.

Operating Revenue Sources



Capital Revenue Sources

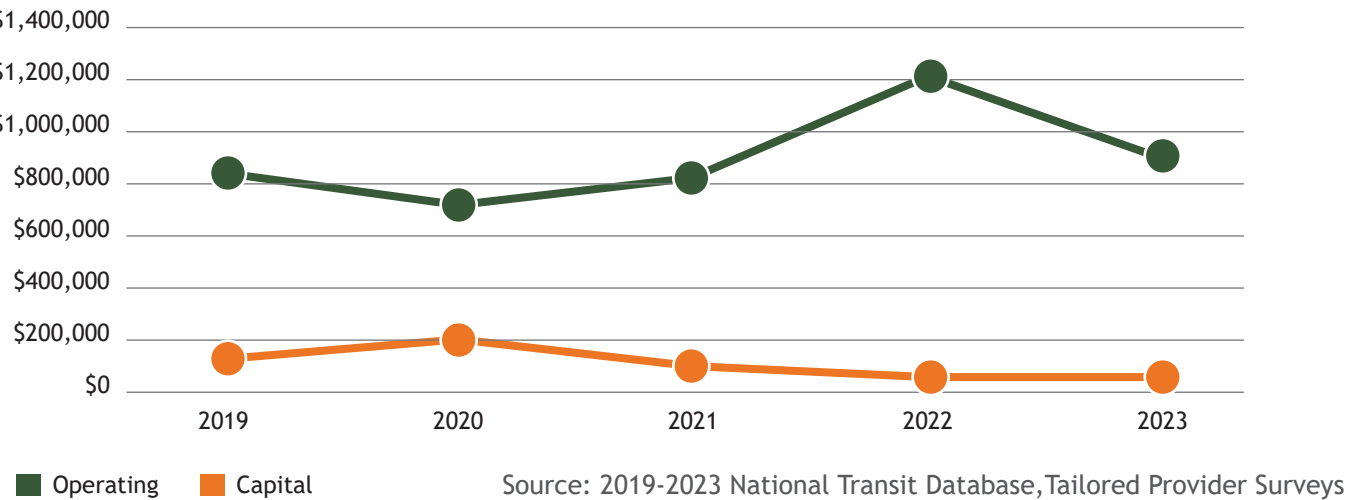


Source: 2023 National Transit Database, Tailored Provider Surveys



# Historic Revenue Data

The following chart shows five-year SE TPROperating and capital funding trends. Operating funds have grown by about 7 percent since 2019, although operating revenue spiked above \$1 million in 2022 before falling again in 2023. Since 2021, capital funding for the Southeast TPR has significantly declined, with no agencies in the region receiving any form of capital support to date.



# Regional Transit Revenue Trends

## Annual Operating/Capital Projections

Regional transit funding projections provide a framework for transit planning in the future. However, while these projections are informative, many factors can significantly impact the accuracy of forecasts, including the availability and allocation of funding, economic volatility, and the rate of inflation. As part of this plan refresh, this financial snapshot section focuses exclusively information from the 2023 TAM Plan data and 2023 NTD data to outline projected capital and operating needs through 2050. This financial snapshot is intended to provide a high-level understanding of the magnitude of projected capital and operating expenses relative to anticipated revenue streams. It highlights the scale of need across a region and identifies the funding gaps that must be addressed. These gaps will require a combination of local investment, competitive state and federal grant awards, and potentially new or currently unidentified funding sources to sustain and expand transit services over the coming decades.

### Capital and Operating Costs

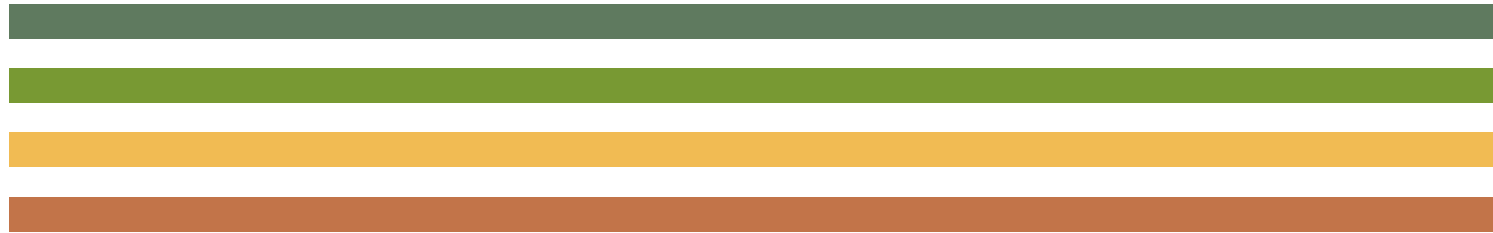
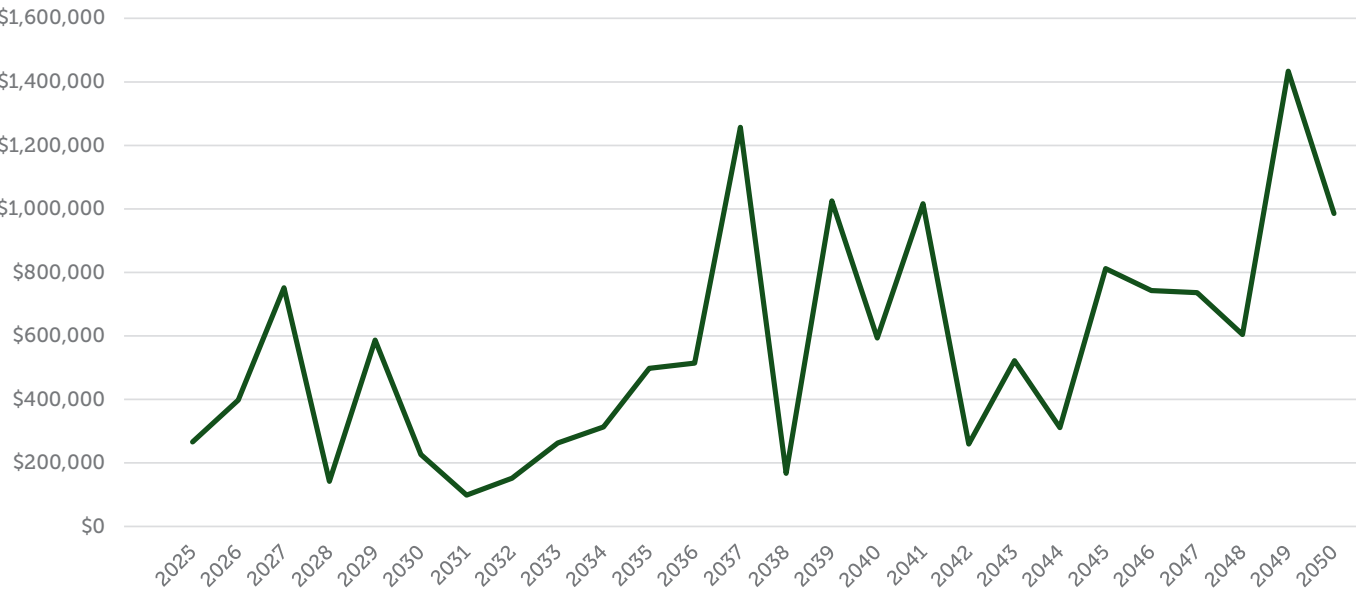
The 2023 TAM Plan uses a four-year planning horizon (2023-2026), consistent with FTA requirements, and identifies asset conditions, anticipated replacement needs, and capital costs necessary to maintain a state of good repair over that period.

To develop a more complete picture of rolling stock replacement needs, data from the 2023 TAM Plan was compared against fleet replacement projections from the 2020 Statewide Transit Plan. This comparison helped reconcile discrepancies between the two sources by accounting for vehicles that were identified for replacement in the 2020 Plan but had not yet been procured as of 2023. It also

allowed the inclusion of vehicles expected to reach the end of their useful life just beyond the TAM Plan’s four-year horizon (2023-2026), ensuring that the analysis captures both deferred procurements and emerging replacement needs through the full planning period. This combined approach supports a more realistic estimate of total capital costs over the long term.

The chart below shows projected capital expenditures for rolling stock replacement among SE TPR rural transit providers from 2025 through 2050. Year-to-year cost fluctuations reflect the cyclical nature of vehicle replacement, influenced by fleet sizes, staggered procurement schedules, and vehicle life cycles. This forecast highlights the timing and scale of capital needs required to keep fleets in a state of good repair, assuming replacements only—without expanding fleet capacity—over the 25-year planning horizon.

### Capital Expenditures to Maintain State of Good Repair

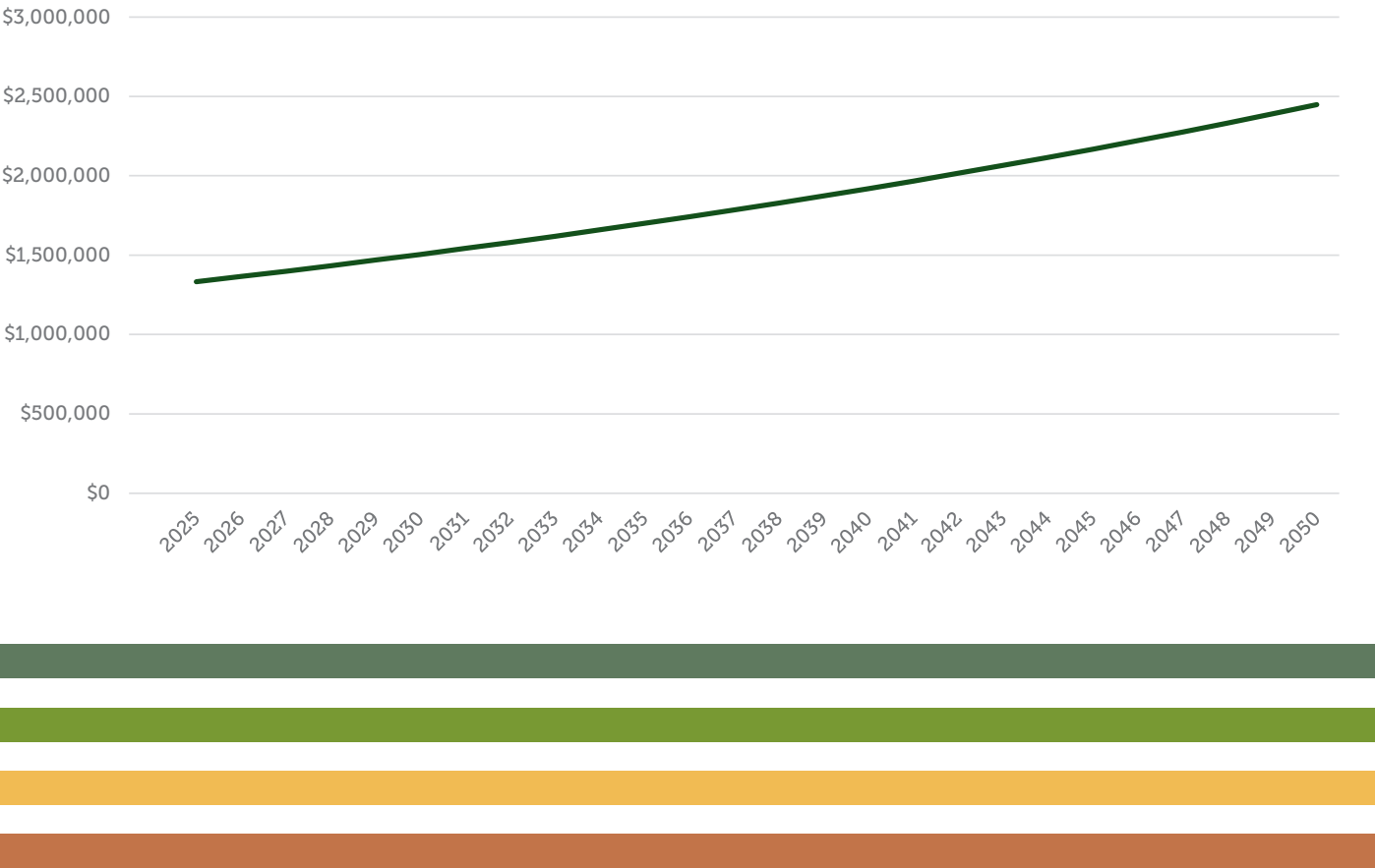




Operating cost estimates were developed using 2023 NTD data reported by transit agencies. To project future costs, these baseline figures were escalated using county-level population growth forecasts. This approach reflects anticipated increases in service demand driven by demographic changes.

Similarly, the following chart illustrates projected operating expenditures for transit providers from 2025 through 2050. The forecast assumes continuation of existing service levels and does not account for major changes in service, such as new routes or significant expansions. As such, the analysis provides an estimate of future operating needs, useful for identifying long-term funding requirements under a steady-state service scenario.

**Anticipated Operating Expenditure Forecasts**  
(To Maintain Current Operations)



**Funding Programs and Opportunities**

Federal funding is the primary source of revenue for transit and human services providers in Colorado, supporting both operating and capital projects. CDOT serves as the designated recipient for rural transit funds, allocating Grants for Rural Areas (5311) funding based on a Colorado-specific rural funding methodology. Additionally, CDOT distributes Bus and Bus Facilities (5339) and Planning (5304) funds through an annual competitive grant application process open to rural providers across the state.

Historically, funding for both operating and capital transit needs has been limited. In the previous planning cycle, strategic funds from sources like Senate Bill (SB)-267 and others were allocated for transit capital projects over four years. Recently, the Clean Transit Enterprise, established through House Bill (HB) 21-260, created a Retail Delivery Fee to provide competitive funding for zero-emission transit planning, facilities, charging infrastructure, and bus replacement projects. Furthermore, SB 24-230 introduces an “Oil and Gas Production Fee” to fund future transit and rail projects, with implementation expected in January 2026. This bill allocates fees from oil and gas companies to fund a Formula Local Transit Operations Grant Program (70 percent), Competitive Local Transit Grant Program (10 percent), and Rail Funding Program (20 percent).

Due to limited state funding, many transit agencies in Colorado rely heavily on local funding, especially for operational costs. Alternative funding sources to support local and regional transit services include:

- General funds
- Lodging taxes
- Parking fees
- Property taxes
- Public-private partnerships
- Rural transportation authorities
- Sales and use taxes
- Sponsorships/donations
- Tourism taxes
- Utility taxes/fees
- Vehicle fees
- CDOT’s Office of Innovative Mobility Enterprise Funding



# Federal Transit Administration Funding Programs

- Accelerating Innovative Mobility - 5310
- Access and Mobility Partnerships - 5310
- Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Program - 5339(b)
- Capital Investment Grant - 5309
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities - 5310
- Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities - 5339(a)
- Grants for Rural Areas - 5311
- Human Resources and Training - 5314
- Integrated Mobility Innovation - 5310
- Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(c)
- Mobility for All Pilot Program Grants - 5310
- Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Demonstration Program - 5312
- Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning - 20005(b)
- Planning Grants - 5304
- Public Transportation Innovation - 5312
- Rural Transportation Assistance Program - 5311(b)(3)
- State of Good Repair Grants - 5337
- Technical Assistance and Standards Development - 5314(a)

# Implementation Strategies

Implementation actions are meant to be near-term, practicable measures related to the TPR’s transit vision and goals and to support the implementation of identified transit projects in the Region.

- Advocate for stable funding to maintain the operation of existing transit services.
- Ensure ongoing funding of maintenance and storage facilities for transit vehicles.
- Advocate for full funding of TPR-identified transit capital and operating projects.
- Maintain all assets in a state of good repair.
- Maximize existing and seek new funding sources to expand local and regional services to include additional days, hours, and geographic coverage.
- Expand regional transit service to provide access to goods and services to enhance quality of life for historically disadvantaged populations.
- Advocate for and ensure implementation of greater transit connectivity between regions, thereby providing reliable transit options for school, employment, and community events.
- Improve transit amenities in the Region, through implementation of signage and shelters.
- Partner and collaborate with CDOT and local agencies to increase coordinating council participation and expand coordination, marketing, and outreach between transit providers and human services agencies.
- Ensure the coordinating council has adequate resources and funding needed to explore joint strategies, and maximize partnership opportunities.



# Priority Projects

Based on findings from public input, data about gaps and needs, and input from stakeholders, SE TPR members prioritized their operating and capital projects for the Region. If projects were added after the TPR prioritization process, those projects are identified as “unranked.” It is important to note that while projects are ranked, priorities may change based on available funding, grant opportunities, agency needs, etc.

Rank	Planning Project ID	Project Name	Project Description	Capital Cost (\$M)	10-Year Operating Cost (\$M)	Project Benefits

**Priority projects are currently under review. An updated list of projects will be included in the final Regional Transit Plan**

